

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny Hoyer released the following statement today in recognition of the 36th celebration of Earth Day, which will be observed on Saturday, April 22.

“On April 8, I had the opportunity to participate in the 18th Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup sponsored by the Alice Ferguson Foundation. Thousands of volunteers gathered at 241 sites in Maryland, Washington, DC, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia to remove trash and debris from the banks of the river and its tributaries. In collecting more than 131 tons of garbage from the Potomac River watershed, we witnessed firsthand the impact that human neglect can have on our environment.

“For those of us who regularly participate in the annual event, the Cleanup once again drove home the point that the health of our environment is dependent upon our commitment to its protection and preservation. And, as stewards of the environment, we are responsible for preserving and protecting our natural resources, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

“Unfortunately, on this Earth Day – a day on which we celebrate the programs and protections that were put in place as a result of the environmental movement thirty-six years ago – we find the Bush administration once again taking a step backwards in the efforts to achieve a safer, cleaner and healthier world.

“The Administration’s proposed 2007 Budget proposes \$25 billion in cuts to environmental programs over the next five years – dramatically underfunding a host of programs instituted to ensure clean and drinkable water, continued preservation and conservation of open space, and the ability of our family farmers to protect and enhance natural resources.

“In our region, the Bush Administration’s proposed budget leaves us far short of the amount necessary to significantly improve the health of our greatest natural asset - the Chesapeake Bay.

“The President’s request cuts funding for EPA’s Chesapeake Bay Program Office by approximately \$350,000. It also eliminates or cuts additional programs crucial to cleaning up the Bay including Farm Bill Conservation programs that help farmers reduce agricultural runoff entering the Bay, the Small Watershed Grant program, the Chesapeake Bay Targeted

Watershed Grants Program, and the Clean Water State Revolving Program.

“We have an obligation to preserve the framework of environmental law put in place 36 years ago, and fight against proposals to roll back important protections. Regrettably, the Bush administration has launched an attack on environmental protections by rolling back essential funds for the nation’s most important programs, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

“In addition to gutting environmental protections, the Bush administration continues to pursue a 19th century energy policy, with an increased reliance on drilling and dependence on fossil fuels – rather than the 21st century energy policy that we need. In lieu of federal action, more than half of our state governments are embracing programs designed to lower greenhouse-gas emissions and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. America should work toward finding an economically sound, environmentally friendly way to reduce global warming and diminish America’s dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

“The health of our environment is a direct result of our commitment to its protection and preservation. We must do better to produce energy more efficiently, clean up our waterways, promote wildlife conservation, and protect our drinking water supplies.

“On this Earth Day, I urge all citizens to join with me in striving to do better in our personal efforts to preserve the environment and calling upon the Administration to reassess its values by providing the focus and resources necessary to preserve our planet for future generations.”

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